



## **northern rock bass**

*Ambloplites rupestris*

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Perciformes
Family:	Centrarchidae

### **Features**

The average northern rock bass is ten inches long and weighs one pound. The heavy body and large mouth are among the characteristic features of this sunfish. Its upper jaw extends past the middle of its eye. It has six anal fin spines and 12 dorsal fin spines. The lower sides have dark spots arranged in horizontal lines. The back and sides are olive while the belly is dirty white. The dorsal, tail, and anal fins have light bands and brown blotches.

### **Natural History**

The northern rock bass lives in streams with permanent flow, low turbidity, plentiful hiding places, and a silt-free bottom. It has the ability to change color rapidly. It feeds most actively in late evening and early morning, eating insects, fish, and crayfish. Spawning occurs in spring. The male fans out a nest on the sand or gravel bottom. Nests are not placed in colonies, as are those of some of the other sunfish. The male stays with the nest until the young have

dispersed. The northern rock bass typically lives five to six years.

### **Habitats**

interior rivers and streams; Mississippi River; natural lakes and prairie marshes

### **Iowa Status**

common; native

### **Iowa Range**

eastern half of Iowa and Skunk River

### **Bibliography**

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.